

Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-15

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DRAFTED BY ARA/AND/E - MR. GUERRA:LEE

APPROVED BY ARA - MR. MCNEIL

ARA/AND - MR. STEVEN

-----052284 090445Z /12

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY QUITO PRIORITY

INFO AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 228822

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, EC

SUBJECT: ECUADOREAN EMBASSY REACTION TO ALLEGED US EMBASSY INTERFERENCE IN ELECTORAL PROCESS

1. ECUADOREAN CHARGE SEVILLA BORJA CALLED DESK TODAY TO EXPRESS CONCERN OVER ALLEGED ARTETA CHARGE. HE SAID THAT AT THIS DELICATE TIME, ANY ACCUSATION OF THIS TYPE COULD PLAY INTO THE HANDS OF ELEMENTS OPPOSED TO THE RETORNO. THE DESK REPLIED USING A SHORTENED VERSION OF THE EMBASSY'S EXCELLENT PRESS RELEASE OF SEPTEMBER 5 (REFTEL B) AND SOME OF THOSE FACTS THAT ARE PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE CONTAINED IN REFTEL A. SEVILLA BORJA SAID THAT HE UNDERSTOOD THE EMBASSY'S POSITION BUT THAT HE HOPED THE EMBASSY'S CONTACTS WITH POLITICIANS IN ECUADOR COULD BE MINIMIZED. HE WAS TOLD THAT EMBASSY INTERCHANGES OF OPINION ARE A NORMAL FUNCTION OF DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATION, AND SUCH MEETINGS CANNOT BE INTERPRETED AS SIGNIFYING PREFERENCE FOR ANY PARTICULAR

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CANDIDATE MUCH LESS INTERVENTION.

2. UPON HEARING ABOUT THIS CONVERSATION, MCNEIL CALLED SEVILLA BORJA. IN A FRIENDLY WAY HE TOLD HIM THAT WE WONDERED IF HE WASN'T TAKING THESE WILD ACCUSATIONS TOO SERIOUSLY. AFTER ALL, HE KNEW THAT EMBASSIES EVERYWHERE HAD CONTACTS WITH SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL GROUPS AND THIS WAS

NORMAL AND NECESSARY. WE HAD NO REPEAT NO PARTISAN PREFERENCES; WE DID HAVE A PREFERENCE FOR DEMOCRACY, BUT THAT WAS NO SECRET. PEOPLE MADE FALSE CHARGES ABOUT THE US FROM TIME TO TIME AND WE TOOK THEM IN OUR STRIDE. SEVILLA BORJA ADMITTED ALL THIS WAS TRUE, THAT THE INCIDENT AS WELL AS THE CHARGE WAS MANUFACTURED FOR SHORT-TERM POLITICAL GAIN. HE CONFESSED A GENERAL PREOCCUPATION THAT NOTHING UNTOWARD OCCUR THAT MIGHT BE USED TO UPSET THE RETORNO PROCESS. MCNEIL ASSURED HIM THAT THE DEPARTMENT AND EMBASSY QUITO WERE OF ONE MIND ABOUT BEING PRUDENT, THOUGH WE WOULD NOT BE INTIMIDATED FROM CONDUCTING NORMAL DIPLOMATIC BUSINESS. MCNEIL SUGGESTED THAT WE OUGHT TO TREAT THE WHOLE THING CALMLY AND NOT WORRY TOO MUCH ABOUT IT. SEVILLA BORJA AGREED THAT IT WAS PARTICULARLY UNFAIR TO ATTACK THE POLCOUNSELOR WHO IN FACT HAD DONE SO MUCH TO HELP THE IMPROVEMENT OF US-ECUADOR RELATIONS THAT HAD TAKEN PLACE. HE ENDED BY SAYING THAT HE HAD REPORTED TO PRESIDENT POVEDA ON THE VERY WARM RECEPTION HE HAD RECEIVED FROM AMBASSADOR VAKY WHEN HE PRESENTED POVEDA'S LETTER TO PRESIDENT CARTER. CHRISTOPHER

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